

love is the way the jasmine winds to brick  
love is the small of your back  
love is the way animals always know  
love is the presence of my closest friends  
love is feeling comfort safe  
love is my skin absorbing the sun's rays  
love is lazily spending the day in bed with a lover  
love is watching dumb youtube videos for hours  
love is waking up early  
love is sleeping in

love is universal

love is boundless

love is complicated

love is messy

love is a hug hello

love is a hug goodbye

love is laughing at our stupid jokes

love is scary

love is real

love is liberating

# WHAT IS LOVE?

vol.  
1

Playing indigo





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Tongva Land/Los Angeles, Ca

To my Dad & Grandma Barbara,  
Thank you for teaching me how to love  
unconditionally.

photo, make-up, and styling: ISABELLA SANTANA



# Note from the artist:

To some, studying love may seem counterintuitive. How do we as humxn beings study and measure something that exists in all things? How do we study the unifying force between all entities in this universe? And more importantly, how do I study this? Reflecting back, the vastness of my project was not something that I fully realized when I initially set out to understand love through the experiences of my peers. My desire to study love was bred out of what I perceived as an instance of lovelessness. Consequently, this moment made me question whether I, a person who claims to be loving, even knows what love is.

On my journey, I came to learn that not fully understanding love is ironically what brings me closer to understanding love. And as I am now comfortable being in this uncertainty, I chose to take every moment of my life to expand upon my idea of love knowing that love is the only unifying force between myself and everything material and non-material in the pluraverse (I use pluraverse instead of universe because “the diversity of the cosmos is infinite.” -Silvia Austerlic). I am confident knowing love means accepting and embracing the present in it’s vast eternity, uncertainty, and constant change. Without love we would be nothing.

For my research I interviewed 18 humxns all ranging in age from 20-22. However, within this book I intentionally included interviews from QTBIPOC kin only. In the application of intersectional theory first created by the 1977 Combahee River Collective Statement and coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, I aim to acknowledge, highlight and celebrate the many intersecting identities that each of us holds. Thus, the use of the acronym QTBIPOC serves as a tool for multiple purposes:

First, in my attempt to not assume anyone’s knowledge, I would like to share that QTBIPOC stands for Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, People of Color. This term is used as an umbrella term to include anyone whose identities fall under any of these social identifiers. I understand that acronyms can never be entirely exhaustive (i.e., disability not explicitly noted in this acronym) however, I aim to center experiences that are currently and historically marginalized, oppressed, and “out of the norm”.

Second, the term QTBIPOC acknowledges the erasure of Black and Indigenous peoples from many mainstream and counterculture spaces, despite their contributions to our continual fight for liberation.

Lastly, QTBIPOC encourages the continued community and coalition building between all of us that share in this collective. We thrive at the intersections of our identities. Our differences do not define or divide us, but rather serve as the foundations for our shared strength.

The cohort of beings included in this book provide an array of opinions on love while having some unifying themes that connect them all. These themes complicate and compliment my two driving research questions:

1. Does everybody have the capacity to feel love?
2. Is love conceptualized as an agent for implementing social transformation?

Ultimately I want to prove that love is powerful enough to shift the social paradigm. I believe and hope my artbook helps readers understand the value of true love.

My interview selection process was a combination of social media outreach and personal contact. In April of 2019, I created a google form and posted it on my facebook, in UCLA student organization group chats, and personal group chats with friends for people to voluntarily commit their time without compensation. The google form I created gives a brief description of why I am pursuing this project and also what it will be about, along with asking for people's names, pronouns, and contact information. I also asked if people could meet in-person for an interview in LA city since I only wanted to conduct in-person interviews. The form also has a question for people to check off their general availability in order for me to have a better chance at offering date(s)/time(s) in my follow-up email. Lastly, the form had a space for individuals to express their interest in collaborating creatively with me on the artistic content of this artbook (to be explained more in the Project Expansion section).

I used a google form so that I could get random voluntary interest from people in hopes of interviewing folks outside my network. However, 8 out of the 18 interviewees were chosen because I personally asked if they would be interested in being interviewed. I was comfortable asking these 8 people specifically knowing the dynamic of our relationship, that this is a project they could be interested in, and because I admire their viewpoints of the world.

## **Interview Questions**

Pre interview:

Please choose one song that makes you think of love or that makes you feel a certain type of love and come prepared to play it for me

In-person interview:

1. Please state your name (how you would like it to be in the zine **\*\*now artbook\*\***), pronouns, age, the color of comfort, where you consider home/where you're "from"

2. What is love?

3. How do you feel love?

4. If love had a smell what would that smell be?

5. Why did you choose this particular song?

a. Can you elaborate on what parts of the song make you feel a certain way? What catches your attention about it?

6. Who feels love? Is love universal? Who/what is in/excluded?

7. Have you ever been in love? If so, how was that experience?

8. What is one way you spread love or can spread more love to those you encounter?

a. How do you express love?

b. How do you enjoy love being expressed to you?



I chose the interview questions to spark a multiplicity of ways love could be interpreted. In asking these questions I hoped to have my interviewees think of love in a micro and macro sense (i.e. within one-self and with the world at large). To record my interviews I used the voice-memo app on my iPhone. I chose to do this so that I could be fully present in the conversations I was having since I do not have the capacity to multitask in taking notes and listening to people's answers. Additionally, because I'm asking people about such an intimate topic, I wanted to make people feel as comfortable as possible and I felt the most effective way I could do this was by creating a conversation with my interviewees. The location of my interviews varied as I did not care about where the interview was conducted as long as my interviewee was comfortable in the setting and that the location was quiet enough to hear their voice.

## Themes

There are a couple of themes that seem to connect across my interviewees' responses. Some of these themes I have identified are the universality of love and the pain of lovelessness. Identifying love as something grander than us but also existing within each humxn was common among my interviewees' responses. I was pleasantly surprised that everybody believed all humxns are capable of feeling love -- some individuals taking it even farther to claim non-humxn species and entities can feel love. Ironically though, many of my interviewees expressed a great deal about lovelessness and/or times when they felt the lack of love caused them pain. The juxtaposition of these two themes calls attention to the perceived impermanence of love. In **all about love: New Visions by bell hooks**, she attests the collective feeling of lovelessness in the United States to our fear of the desire to know too much about love.

She states:

We are simply afraid the desire to know too much about love will lead us closer and closer to the abyss of lovelessness. While ours is a nation wherein the vast majority of citizens are followers of religious faiths that proclaim the transformative power of love, many people feel that they do not have a clue as to how to love. And practically everyone suffers a crisis of faith when it comes to realizing biblical theories about the art of loving in everyday life. It is far easier to talk about loss than it is to talk about love. It is easier to articulate the pain of love's absence than to describe its presence and meaning in our lives.

bell hooks's emphasis on theological and faith-based meanings of love is important as even in moments of spiritual connection (which is a necessary ingredient to understanding love), how is it that humxns still feel a lack of love? Through my own experience with studying and practicing Buddhism, I think when we get to the point of understanding love on a spiritual level (i.e. understanding that my universe and the pluraverse only exists based on love and death (fear), with love as the driving force for connection, growth and change) then we must confront and un-earth ourselves if the world we live in is not one of our highest good. On a global scale this deeper level of love forces us to confront colonial conditioning and years of harm/trauma on all of our psyches. Another quote that helps me understand love is from **Deepak Chopra's The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success**. Deepak states: This moment is as it should be, because it took the entire universe to make this moment. When you struggle against this moment, you struggle against the entire universe.

Once we are able to accept this fact, then the next steps are identifying a definition of love useful for one's own expansion in their universe -- "the word universe means one song. Your every intention or heart's desire is like a melody in nature's symphony; all you have to do is sing your song" (Chopra). This definition may and probably will change over-time as words hold different meanings across space and time, but at love's core will always be love, life and creation.



## Definitions of Love

Defining love can be difficult if you do not engage in the daily practice of stripping away **hetero-patriarchal-colonial-capitalist** ideas of love. I will break down each word of that phrase as follows:

--- **“Hetero”** denoting to heterosexuality. This is an oppressive ideology as it limits sexuality to a binary and posits heterosexuality as the dominant form of relation between two humxns. When in fact we as humxns have the capacity to be sexually attracted to anybody no matter who you are, what your gender expression is, or what genitalia you’ve got!

--- **“Patriarchal”** denoting to the patriarchy. This is an oppressive ideology for the emphasis on Cis-gender (i.e. the gender and sex of a person alligning from birth. . . (sex and gender are social constructs as well but google is free)) men as the carriers of society and culture -- the lineage through which we assign “humxn rights”, wealth and property. The patriarchy posits women, womxn, fem, trans, non-binary, and intersex folks as inferior, not humxn, and as property.

--- **“Colonial”** refers to colonialism and settler colonialism. Colonialism is when a group of individuals uses the people and resources of another group for a finite amount of time. Settler-colonialism is when a group of individuals uses the people and resources of another group with the goal of “replacing” the colonized group through genocide and enslavement. If I have to explain why this is bad, again google is free.

--- **“Capitalist”** in reference to capitalism which is an oppressive ideology born out of and perpetuated through the continued colonialism of Black, Brown, and Indigenous humxns. Capitalism is bad as in its present-day global reach with long-lasting environmental/ecological effects is killing. all. of. us.

Now that I have briefly outlined where to NOT look for definitions of love, I will share with you some of my favorite definitions. To start, I will offer bell hooks definition of love. Relly (she/her) touches upon this in our interview and I was so excited when she did because I think hooks’s definition is a great starting point.

“To truly love we must learn to mix various ingredients -- care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, and trust, as well as honest and open communication.” (bell hooks, all about love).

Another definition of love I align with is Karen Casey’s:

“What I didn’t know as a child and what I still forget as an adult is that I am loved and fully worthy of love, and that my very existence is proof. I am now and always have been part of the spiritual universe. . . Only when we become quiet and trust that we are worthy and that love is our birthright do we discover that love’s friendship has enfolded us” (Karen Casey, Worthy of Love).

For me, love only exists inside of a radical community based ideology. For love to exist within me it must also exist in my peers and must be nurtured in both spaces. A few other definitions/understandings of love that have helped me come closer to living truly in love follow:

“If we are interested in building a movement that will not constantly be subverted by internal differences, then we must build from the inside out, not the other way around. Coming to terms with the suffering of others has never meant looking away from our own.” (Cherrie Moraga, This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical women of color, Foreword to the Second Edition)



The next two definitions are for types of community organizing/healing that I believe are also helpful in understanding how to love as a practice:

“A simple definition of **community accountability**: any strategy to address violence, abuse or harm that creates safety, justice, reparations, and healing, without relying on police, prisons, childhood protective services, or any other state systems.” (Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, & Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities*, introduction)

“The organization generationFIVE defines **transformative justice** as ‘an approach to respond to and prevent child sexual abuse and other forms of violence that puts transformation and liberation at the heart of change.’” (*The Revolution Starts at Home*, introduction)

## Interview Interpretation

I think my interview questions gently guided my interviewees to think outside of dominant cultural and social ideas of love which is more than I had hoped for. Many of my interviewees thanked me for asking questions that they themselves had never thought of or taken the time to answer thus allowing the space for personal reflection and growth. These findings complement my research questions and bring me closer to envisioning love as a force for social change. In order to share these revelations I present this artbook to you.

## Conclusion: Project Expansion

The expanded version of my research project contains the transcribed interview responses intermingled with various forms of art -- i.e. poems, drawings, photographs, collages, etc. -- which you are reading right now! While being aesthetically pleasing, I aim for my artbook to be informative, inspire readers to think critically about love and leave individuals with a sense of hope that we can radically imagine and materialize the world we want to live in.



“Silently wish everyone you encounter happiness, joy, and laughter. By giving and receiving the gifts of caring, affection, appreciation, and love, you will keep wealth circulating in your life.” - Deepak Chopra  
I bless thee forever and always,  
xx indigo









THE REVOLUTION STARTS WITH THOSE WE SHARE THE  
MOST INTIMATE SPACE WITH AND THE ONES WHO  
KNOW US MORE DEEPLY THAN ANYBODY.



THE REVOLUTION STARTS  
WITH OUR LOVERS.





M

E

L

**Age:** 21 years old, not that really means anything, but I guess I've been here for 21 of these cycles

**Color of comfort:** My color of comfort is still really something I'm trying to learn, but for now, I think it's blue.

**Home:** And home is also something I'm still trying to learn. I think home is always going to be wherever my family is because there's no like landmass, there's no earth that is home. . . And so for me home is the people in my life. And like knowing that it doesn't matter where we are geographically, but that's where I can go back, always.

## indigo: What is love?

**Mel:** Okay love... Okay love is a lot of things. Um, I think for me right now... Love is a promise. That way it can be like both a noun, like a thing that I can hold onto it and it's tangible. But it's also a verb, in that, I promise. And you promised. Love is a promise because-- Actually, I saw this on tumblr the other day: Have you ever heard of that saying where it's like, "Don't drown in a sea for people who wouldn't step in a puddle for you." Do you know that saying? I recently saw something that was like, "No, go ahead and drown. Do it! If you love that person, it doesn't have to-- You shouldn't need something to come back from that." And I was like oohh. I understand where that first person was coming from and that's valid. Like, I get it. But like also, no! Sometimes, I just wanna be like "this is how I feel." So love is a promise to me because I think in my life when I see myself getting caught up or bogged down by negativity or a lot of things that I don't want to experience, it's because love has kind of swung on this pendulum from one extreme to the other. So like, it's either only a verb and I'm only expressing love in my actions or what I'm doing. It's very much an active form but that can be really draining and a lot of labor. And then sometimes, it's just this thing that is very immaterial that I can't touch or like, have. It's just this thing. So I end up getting really possessive or like clingy because it's something that I have. Rather than letting it be it's own little-- You're about to hear the STEM in me really come out. Okay so light is both a particle and a wave. It can be both. It can be neither. It's stuck in this space of existing as both but also neither because the minute you look at it as one, you can't see it as the other anymore. So I think for me, love functions for me in my life in that way. Sometimes, I get really obsessed with showing someone I love them through my actions and I can forget that's not necessarily the best thing for me all the time, or even what they need. It's just healthier for me to stay in this balance of seeing love as a promise. So I can actively participate in keeping this promise every day but also hold onto it as something tangible and something firm for me to stand on. So then, I can be at peace without having to worry about what the stability of this love is. And I think I learned that from my parents. Because I think their love is very much just a promise. And I don't know what that promise is but they do. So that's what love is to me.

she/  
her



**i: If love had a smell, what would that smell be?**

**M:** Bread. Bread! And not just a loaf of bread, but the motherfucking bread aisle. And not a bakery because you walk in the bakery and you lose yourself in the bread, you know? But if you're in a store that sells other shit and you walk past the bread aisle, you're like ohhh my god! And then you leave it and you miss it. You get to miss that smell??? That fucking smell. That smell of bread.

**i: Why did you pick "Closure (outro)" by Nicotine?**

**M:** Yeah, and I wanted to like-- I didn't want to think too hard about it because of the conversation we had, but I also didn't want to choose a love song? Because, like, love in my life isn't always romantic love, there's rarely that much romantic love. And she talked about her mom and she talked about the kids and I don't know who the kids are, they can be any kids! And she talks about her art and I was like, all of those things are love. So that's my love song.

**i:** Yeah. Are there any like-- Other than the lyrics? Like musically or like-- Are there any specific points that really just fucking hit you or it's like the whole song?

**M:** Hmm, I definitely do think it's the part about her mother because the entire album, she talks about the tumultuous relationship she's had with her mom, which I really resonate with. And like, because hers is not like explicitly abusive or negative. So it's hard-- We don't have a great relationship but it's not like, bad by any of the typical red flags of bad parenting. And what does she say? She says "the woman I've known since birth." And I was like shit, my mom was the first person I met and I love her. And even if it's up and down, that means so much to me. And it's always gonna mean a lot to me.

And I love that she says, "teach the kids how to love their skin and take care of their outsides and take care of their insides." And I was like, that is love. Like just not giving a fuck about who the kids are, you just want them to love who they are, and love themselves. And she plays piano on this track. I know that it's her playing, but she doesn't play on any of the other tracks and I think that's significant as well.

**i:** Mmmmm, that makes it more special. Awww.

**M:** Yeah. I really love that song.

**indigo: Who is in or excluded from love?**

**M:** (long pause) Who is excluded from feeling love (another long pause) Okay, can I intellucalize this for a second?

**i:** Yeah, of course!

**M:** Okay, so I've read two things that I think are the closest accounts of someone not being loved or not ever feeling love. One was fictional and one was real. So the fictional one was the short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" and it's this story of this utopic city and the city runs by feeding this monster or something underneath the city. And so basically this monster is fed from the sadness of one child. The entire city knows that it's a thing. For the city to work, everyone has to consent into torturing this one child, basically. And it has to be a child. And like, this child has never known life outside of the dungeons and has never experienced anything other than that and so the city manageners or whatever justify this by saying that this is not the case of depriving someone something that they once had; you can't be sad about something that you've never had. Um, but the story is about these people who are like "this is fucked up" and leave the city, but they don't really know what's out there. And the city lets them leave, they're like, if you wanna leave, then go!"



**Mel:** And so I read this story in I think highschool and was really haunted by it because, just the logic of it makes sense, kind of? And I was like oohh, I don't like how easily I was able to buy into it and be like, this makes sense. The second thing I read was this sociology textbook and it was about children's development. There's this case of a child whose mother was disabled and the mother couldn't speak and didn't have a lot of physical mobility--- Also trigger warning, I didn't let ya'll know this is a little heavy-- But children's protective services found her when I think she was like 6 years old after being malnourished and not being able to have been taken care of by her mother. She didn't have the ability to speak or do anything. So the sociologist took a really interesting approach by saying "The Most Unloved Child in the World" and that was an interesting way of framing it because I was like, "I don't think her mom didn't love her. There just wasn't really--there was nothing she could do." But in both cases, I find it interesting that children were the most vulnerable population. Because as a child, that is when you are most vulnerable to not feeling love. As your existence is really dependent on another person. That's when you're in this really precarious situation. Um, so if anyone, I would say children. But that breaks my heart. That makes me really sad. Because children themselves are just embodiments of love. They love you no matter what. Umm...so do I think anyone is excluded from love? I don't think--I don't. That just doesn't compute in my head. It's something that I can't imagine because I can't imagine a life where you didn't have a friend or an animal or something that could give a person love. And I feel like maybe in this big big world, that's happened. But my heart actually breaks for a soul that's ever experienced that. So I'm gonna go ahead and hope no? Because the two examples I can even think of were not entirely--Neither examples were a complete lack of love. Because the people that left the city, loved the child enough to be like "I'm not gonna participate in this." And yeah, I think even if it's not direct, there are people in this world who have love for populations of people. I fucking love Black people. Even if I don't know you, I fucking love you. So as long as you're Black, you got one person on this planet who loves you. And there are people who are social workers and they just love children or love the elderly and want to dedicate their entire lives to doing the best that they can to helping those people.

So I think that's my way of trying to convince myself that at least at some point in existence, everyone and everything feels love.







**Photo:**  
MEL



**I haven't been able to pinpoint  
the singular moment in my  
childhood when I accepted your  
love as conditional**



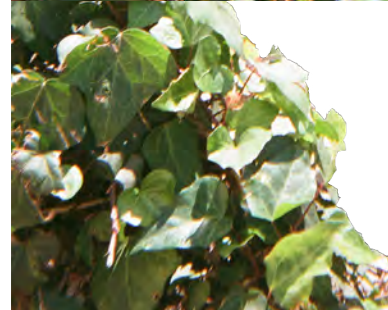
**It probably wasn't a single  
moment in time  
I have no recollection of some  
adolescent catastrophe**



**All I know is that somewhere  
along the way, I learned you  
were incapable of loving  
all of me**



**somewhere between tomboy  
wallpaper and naked skin on  
display,  
I learned to hide**



**I learned filters were the best way  
to keep the peace**

# **On Honesty & Fear**

**by Mel**

**I stopped crawling into  
your  
bed for safety**

**Somewhere along the way,  
I closed up and I haven't been able to  
open up again**

**I no longer hugged you with  
both arms**

**My vaults have since been sealed shut  
to prevent us all from drowning in  
my truths**

**How was your day?  
was answered with a lie**

**I stopped sharing myself**

**And now, two decades have passed  
and I feel locked up  
in a prison we built together  
my unexplained distance was the  
brick  
and your stoic silence was the mortar**

**Poem:** MEL





**indigo:** Have you ever been in love?

**Mel:** Mmmm, ugh! Ugh!! Am I in love right now?? Okay, so I wanna preface this by saying I kinda don't fuck with the idea that being in love on a scale of 0 - 100 has to be 100? Because I feel like I can be like 5 in love with you. Like 5 out of 100. But I'm still kinda in love with you! I'm in love with the way people's--I'm gonna snitch on myself, FUCK! Woohah, the words were coming out faster than I could catch them. But like--I love some people's names. I relish the feeling of saying their names. So maybe I'm in love with you? Maybe I'm not? Should it matter? I've definitely been in love. So many times. And it's definitely something I thoroughly enjoy. I wanna have all of it. I'm very greedy about being in love. Because it's so fun! And it's so pure! It's very childlike, I feel like as an adult, it's the closest you can get to being a child. It's just like (high pitched) I just love you!!!! I'm smiling right now because I'm just like mmmmmmm I love it! I fucking love being in love. Yes, I've been in love. Always. I'm always trying to be in love. I never wanna stop being in love. That's when the apocalypse truly hits. When I'm done being in love? That's my personal apocalypse. I'm done after that. But there's like poo parts. It's not always fun & games. What is? If anything was ever that great, it wouldn't be that great. It'd be grass! Because grass is fucking great but like, it's everywhere so it's just grass. And I don't want my love to be grass. Even though you're great grass, thank you!

**i:** Fucking grass hater! I'm like, "I love you grass!"

**M:** I've written poetry for grass! I love you grass. But yeah, I've been in love a lot.

**i:** How was that experience?

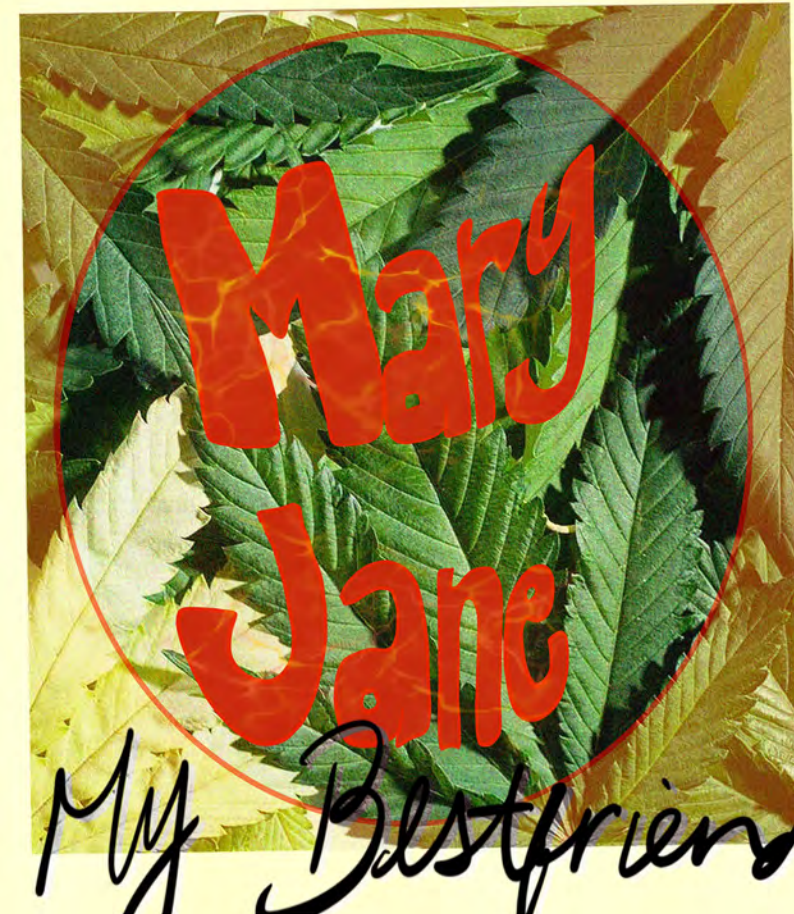




**Mel:** Each a new experience. Each process of falling in love. And each process of re-falling in love, because I've fallen in love with the same person over and over and over again. Um, there's like platonically falling with people. There's falling in love with myself too. And that's definitely the toughest one because it's an uphill battle! And often when I fall in love, it feels like falling. It's like, I just slipped and fell one day and you were there! Very romantic idea, but like, I am falling with myself every day. And some days, that doesn't look like love, or at least what I think love looks like. But some days it does! And some days it's really cool. And it's hard sometimes, it's really hard sometimes. But I think the more we have an idealized version of love, the harder it gets. Because it's like "well love looks like this and this doesn't match this, so am I really in love?" So I think it takes a lot of affirmation and standing firm in the fact that yeah, I really am in love. I think I would enjoy the experience a lot more if socially, I was allowed to tell people I'm in love with them without all these fucking air signs running away! Yes! Yes, I said it! Because I have a scorpio moon so sometimes I can be really intense and just be like "I think I'm in love with you." and then people are like "oop! Gotta go!" So being in love would be a lot better if people weren't so afraid of it. But it's a rightful thing to be afraid of. It's like the ocean. And um, I'm not trying to conquer it, but I'm definitely trying to go for a ride as often as I can.

marj

indigo





love is a phone call versus a text

love is a touch on your shoulder, knee, or hands when we're talking

love is accepting help from others

love is cooking food for friends

love is existing authentically no matter the space i'm in -- i will always be me

love is paying for food knowing the next time we go out, i'll treat you

love is sending you a song to let you know i'm thinking of you when we're apart

love is going out of your way to make sure there's food i can eat #vegan #4lyfe

love is undisturbed eye contact

love is a smile

love is a compliment when my self-confidence needs it the most

love is unrestricted movement, letting my body receive the music however she pleases

love is staring at the city from above

love is looking at the moon from below

love is being of service to others

love is thanking strangers for kind gestures

love is labor

love is poetry

love is wearing my parent's vintage clothing

love is music

love is dancing

love is hard

love is effortless

love is the way the jasmine clings to brick

love is the smell of spring

love is the ocean

love is the way animals always know how to comfort me when i'm crying

love is laughing uncontrollably when in the presence of my closest friends

love is comfort

love is feeling safe

love is my skin absorbing the sun's rays

love is lazily spending the day in bed with a lover

love is watching dumb youtube videos for hours

love is waking up early

love is sleeping in

love is universal

love is boundless

love is complicated

love is messy

love is a hug hello

love is a hug goodbye

love is laughing at our stupid jokes

love is scary

love is real

love is liberating

love is the physical

love is the mental

love is the emotional

love is the spiritual

love is whole

love is complete

love is a state of being

love is fearless

love is timeless

love is limitless

## love is security

love is going home even though i want to stay with you so badly -- i want to honor and listen to my body

love is driving you just so we can keep the conversation going as long as possible

love is unconditional

love is everything

love is a lot

love is enough

love is omnipresent

love is safety

love is knowing when i'm hangry

love is poetic

love is silly

love is goofy

love is laughter

love is strange

love is eccentric

love is electric

love is connection when i least expect it

love is what we all deserve

love is love for myself

love is persistent

love is a willingness and acceptance to be loved

love is radical

love is passion

love is affirming your presence

love is affirming my presence

love is desire

love is intentional

love is curious

love is all

love is a choice

love is utopic

love is possible

love is unstoppable.



# Relly (Ariel)

she/her



Age: 21

Color of comfort: LAVENDER

Home: WESTCHESTER





how is it  
that cis  
men are  
just so  
disap-  
pointing?

## indigo: What is love?

**Ariel:** So I was reading for you know, once this year or something! And I decided to take a picture... I was reading the bell hooks book, 'All About Love'. And I took a picture of one of the things she wrote in it. And so I'm gonna read it because I saved it for like important stuff. Like to remind myself but also just to have and I think this is an important to take it out. Okay, so she says this and she quotes another author because she says, doing the research she has done about love, people love talking about love, but no one can really define it. So this is like the first full definition she found. "To truly love we must learn to mix various ingredients, care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, and trust as well as open and honest communication". So, I love people. I love a lot of things. I love dogs. But I think reading this resonated with me because I understood it as being like full love. And like these are all things, it resonated with me because I understood all of these, these ingredients, and how in the time that I was reading this, I was relating it to a situation and I felt like it just resonated at the moment a lot of those things were missing. And I was also able to relate it to other relationships. The first one was romantic and other relationships are like friendships, where all of those things are present. And how the differences between the feelings I have with the person where like those things were missing and the relationships where they are present. So that's me right now what I'm working with in terms of love. I think before I had that definition, I would have just said like being I don't know, caring about a person enough to like want to be a good person yourself too, I guess, like being nice and thoughtful and honest with yourself but also obviously with the person. And enjoying it. Yeah.



## **Q: How do you feel love?**

**A:** So, in a lot of different ways. But I am a really affectionate person. And I appreciate physical affection. I appreciate physical affection, I appreciate when people do things like pub-, well not super publicly, but like public acknowledgment. And verbal affirmation. So I was, like a good example of me realizing this is when I was on set of a Black Eyed Peas music video. I was with one of my good friends from high school and all these weird random young actor kids. I am a super social person, but at this point of the day I was quiet. I didn't talk to anybody. I just sat and thought and observed too. My friend for some reason was flourishing with these weirdos. He was having the time of his life but I was just quiet for like hours. We were sitting next to each other and there'd be moments where every now and then he would just like rest his hand on my leg, or pat me. I don't know if he realized it, but I think he might because he does this often. And, like I do feel pretty connected to him. I have a soft place in my heart for him because I feel like I always felt kind of understood by him. But I think examining this situation made me realize too is because he is able to speak my language. Like him patting me or touching me every now and then it was like him checking in on me, him basically saying "hey Ariel, I'm still here. Hey are you still here? You good? We good?" And he does that often, just like communicates with me through physical stuff. So that was a big deal. I think that's when it really clicked for me of what that means and how I understand it. Because it is care. And that's a form of love. And like even now like the main friend group that I am in today, through school, most of my friends are not very physical, physically affectionate. And sometimes it's like, that shows me too how much I value it because I miss it sometimes. So appreciate getting it from my other friends. Like me saying I miss laying on Melissa's bed and us just like laying together is something that I value.

Being able to be like physically close to my friends or the people that I care about is something that I value. And that's what makes me feel cared about and comfortable. And so that's also why, obviously I feel like for most people in romantic relationships or whatever it's like important for them to be and people value just laying with each other. I value that too.





**I: Why did you pick this song?**

**A:** I chose 'Be Your Girl' because I couldn't think of anything and then I was like too afraid to try to fit something and make something work and also not be cliché about it. I also was thinking I like a lot of songs for a little bit and then I like another song. But I've always loved 'Be Your Girl'. It was like one of the first Kaytranada songs I heard and Kaytranada I love him so much. The song makes me so happy for years. It makes me want to move it makes me want to dance and I'll sing it... When I listen to music, I listen to the production and the sound before the words, so it takes me a while to understand like, what the song is about and what they are talking about, even though I can sing the words. And I think I could be wrong but I feel like she's singing about a woman. (Finds out she was wrong) Well my idea for a very long time was that she was talking about a woman, that's even cooler! And even more fun. But yeah I love the song. I chose it because I love the song. The song makes me so happy and it makes me want to dance. And I love dancing. I love dancing. I love going places and dancing. I love going to Kaytranada shows and other fun DJ sets and that kind of music, dancing. And I love dancing with people. So when I go there, I am dancing with people I don't know. And I'm enjoying my time. And I feel like that is a form of love that I love to experience. And I love going to places like that and dancing with the people that I love. And I cannot wait to keep doing that with more people I meet and love. When I first thought of the question, I was like "Should I do this song? No.. Let me think of something else". But then I was like, no I've got to. I have been going to concerts for a while with my friends and stuff and I think I have always wanted I guess to experience that with someone that I am involved with I guess romantically. And I think it'd be fun to be interested in similar music and be able to like do that stuff together. So that is something that I'm looking forward to relating to this. Because I'd really like to go to a Kaytranada concert with more people I love and it was really fun to go to a concert with you because I love you and I love dancing to Kaytranada with you. Including that song. So just continuing that until we die.

**I: Have you ever been in love?**

**A:** No. I haven't. So I was dating this guy kind of... Now my new thing is saying that I was dealing with him. I like that a lot better. I was dealing with this guy and I loved him, human to human. I loved him. I loved him very much. But I was aware, and I think also part of this is like me being like a hopeless romantic thinking that I can't wait to be fully in love with someone to the point where I feel like I'm flying, and all the fucking stupid movie shit. I believe in that. I know that there's gonna be a point where I'm with a person that I feel so excited about. And they're like doing all this stuff for me, and I'm doing all this stuff for them. It'll just be super enjoyable and I'll just be flying across the city. Like that's how I feel. My friend has told me multiple times, she says "When it gets to that point, I'm not gonna see you for like three months. I'm gonna be fine with it because I don't know, you're gonna be doing your thing. And then you're gonna come back". That is true. But because I am so convinced of that, I knew that with the specific person I was dealing with, that I just love him, human to human. I was very aware of that the whole time. I was like "No this is not worthy of me cheating to the maximum and wanting to jump off of rooftops onto other rooftops onto other rooftops". But I was still acting like, I don't know, I'm still like weary of his feelings and trying to take care of him as if I was in love. But now that makes me worried about once I do get to that point, how much I am going to be closed off to things that may not be good for me. But yeah I have not felt being in love before. Can't wait. I have loved people. I love a lot of people but I have not been in love. And I think I'll know when that happens. And I think I'll have good awareness of that.



## Indigo: How do you express love? How do you like love being expressed to you?

**Ariel:** I like to tell people the things that I like about them. Or the things that I notice in them. I like being encouraging. I really like to use my words. And I really like to use physical affection. And that's like to show them I love them, to make them feel comfortable. I do it very often. And I recently realized to maybe hold off on that to people that I don't know. Because it is very easy for me. Again I'm a very social person. When I am talking to people and getting to know them and engage with them, especially if they are shy or something, oftentimes I will touch their arm or their leg while I'm talking to them to try to like, as like and invitation kind of thing. And make them feel comfortable with me. But now I am learning, if I don't know them, I don't necessarily know their boundaries to be more wary of them. If I do touch them, maybe have it be like on their-- I just try not to now. But I also know that like, that comforts me when I don't know people and they just start touching me immediately, a lot. I really understand how people don't like that, but I really, really appreciate that. So I use my words, physical affection, and sometimes for like, I don't really, I am not very good at gift giving, but I do try to buy people food. The main thing though I think is telling others things. For me, I appreciate receiving love through physical affection and verbal affirmation. But I also like people telling me what they like, because I like making people feel good. So tell me that you don't want me to do that and you'd rather me do something else. Whatever you want me to do I'll probably do it... because you'll appreciate it. And I do like PDA, and it doesn't need to be overly anything. But I just like to feel acknowledged publicly. But like if you don't want to acknowledge me publicly, then that makes me feel weird about what we do when we're not out and about. Especially when it doesn't match up at all. Yeah so, just hold my hand or something. Give me a hug. Just do it.





# Jana Lang

she/they

age: 20  
color of  
comfort: burnt  
orange  
Home:  
Oakland, California

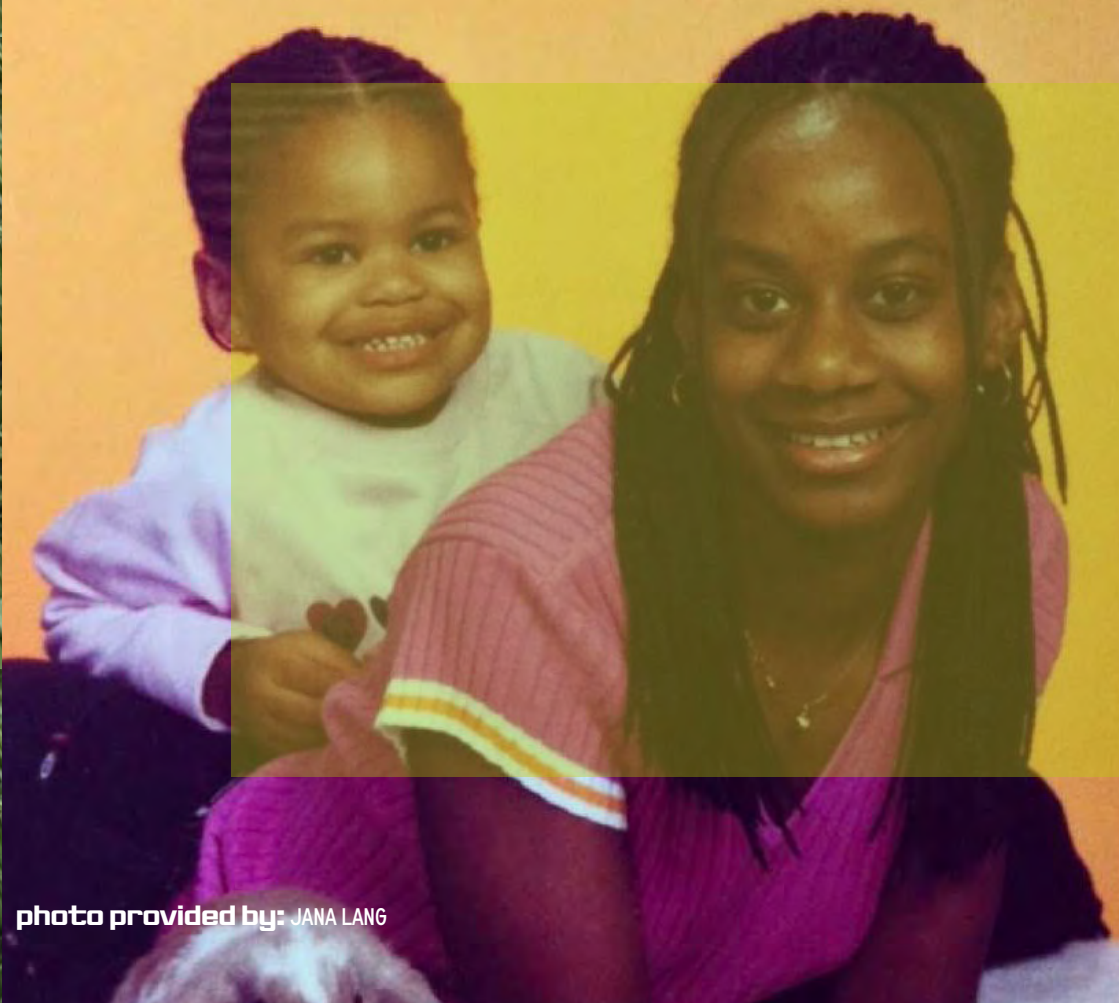


photo provided by: JANA LANG





## indigo: What is love?

**Jana:** what is love? I guess? It's like a feeling. Um, I would definitely say it's like a connection. But it doesn't have to be -- I feel like when people say connection it's like the strongest thing in the world, but I mean, it definitely varies. So Yeah, I think that's what love is. And I mean, there's obviously other things that comprise but like, the way people experience love and the way they like, feel love is very different, like, you know, love languages and stuff like that.

## i: How do you feel love?

**J:** Okay, I first it's definitely words of affirmation. I would say that because I don't like this trait about myself, but I know that I have it \*giggles\* I just like, like verbal validation, even if I know I'm doing fine sometimes I just like the extra help of knowing that you still like me or that I look nice today \*giggles\* but that and just like also what is it action? What actions of whatever -- I don't know, just like doing things that help me out or you know that I would like. That's always nice and when people get me things when they think of me, that's really sweet. Oh like "I crossed your mind on a random day?" I know that doesn't happen, but um yeah. And just like conversation too, having really meaningful, intelligent conversation. That sounds so cornball Tumblr 12 year old but like, \*giggles\* seriously though, like, it's just fun being able to jibber jabber like that's a Gemini placement jumping out really hardcore. But um, yeah, like, you know, it's fun... I feel like love can be really deep but it oh, like I don't want to be in the floor in my feelings I don't know that's, that seems so intense, but I think it should be fun. Like the love I have my friends and love I have for people romantically for my family, all of that's very fun but also very serious and like, I would never turn on them I guess not unless it was absolutely necessary but I feel like the people that I have now that are like my core group of people like we finna be in this shit for da long haul so yeah.



photo provided by JANA LANG



**indigo:** what happens like, with love if it's not reciprocated?

**Jana:** Whoo... it just feels wasted. Like, why am I doing this stuff for you? Why do I like, allow you to come to me when you need help, but it's not the same, you know, just like or, you know, you wouldn't do the little things for me like I would for you like that's... Yeah, it just feels like it's just so time consuming... that's probably kind of becomes like the only thing that you think about and it's like, until you're eventually able to cut that off. So yeah, it's like really busy. I don't know if that's the right word to describe it, but it definitely happens and like, people know, but I think they just ignore that feeling at first until they get to a breaking point of like, you know, unless you just really intuitive and you know, like from the jump.

**indigo:** Final thoughts?

**Jana:** I think how I feel about it, is changing... is like kind of constantly changing too. But I think I'm getting a more like, stable ideal in that I don't think for me in particular, it's gonna be like, easy to find like the love that I want. And so like I'll probably be single for a long time, but ok, whatever. Um But yeah, I used to really think love was kind of attached to abandonment but it's really-- and like I still kind of struggle with that too -- but it's really not so.



photo provided by JANA LANG





Painting: JANA LANG



photo provided by JANA LANG



# Bailz

## she/her

**Age:** 21

**Color of comfort:** red

**Home:** The valley (San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles). Wherever I feel the most comfortable.

**indigo: What is love?**

**Bailz:** Love? Okay, when I saw this question I kind of got nervous because I was like, Am I in love? Like what is love? I have no I had no idea. But it's really what you make of it at the end of the day. Love doesn't have to be, you know. I don't know. It doesn't necessarily have to be with another person. I think that's what I've realized is that love can come like with ... It's kind of cheesy but like from within. Um, for me, I associate love with happiness and like feeling full. And I think I felt the most full when I came back from Spain. . . just being very happy with myself and then being able to, like, project that happiness on other people when I interacted with them. So just, I don't know being at ease with myself? Yeah. So yeah, I don't really know where that goes, but yeah, love feeling full.

**i: If love had a smell what would that smell be?**

**B:** Okay, this is a good question. Um, I feel like it's different for different types of love. Depends on what kind of love you're talking about. But one thing that came to mind when I was thinking about this was the smell of honeysuckle. Because when I was younger, when I went to my aunt's house, we always had holiday events there or just like family gatherings there and in the backyard she would have honeysuckle and me and my cousin's would just like, eat them. I don't know if it was because the smell I mean, I don't know we always ate them. But the smell of it just like I had gone back last week for Easter. . . And I smelled it and it just reminded me of my childhood and it was just beautiful. I don't know. Isn't that crazy how a smell can just like, take you back. It's like music too. But yeah, honeysuckle.



photo provided by: BAILZ



## I: Why did you pick this song, Take Your Time (Do It Right) by The S.O.S. Band?

B: So I had heard the song a long time ago, when I was younger my parents used to play it. But it's kind of like one of those songs where I hadn't listened to it in a long time and then I listened to it again, when my friend played it when we were driving to the beach. And she loved it. And she loved it for different reasons. But when she played it, we both loved it together. And then like reminded me again of like childhood... and it was cool how we were able to connect based on that, even though we had like, different experiences from the song we felt something different, but we both loved it. And now every time we go to the beach, we always play it. Yeah, it's actually it's actually it's such a good song! And like I just said, it's a feel good song. Yeah. Yeah, it's really bad. And like, whenever we go to the beach, she just brings her speaker and that's always the first song she puts on. Yeah. So I guess it is kind of a deep song for me! Yeah! It means a lot! And then I played it for my Dad he was like "yes, I love this song" and he loved it and he's like from a totally different generation, but yeah loves it for a different reason but we all love it. oh! and different parts of it you wanted to know? Ah I like it all! I don't know I guess I really can't like pinpoint. \*giggles\*

## I: Is love universal?

B: Um, I think that everyone feels love in different forms like I said before...and I feel this is a hard one for people that that are excluded from it -- this might be a weird way to say it -- but I feel like the people that just don't let it in, that don't want to feel it, but I don't know it might not be that they don't want to feel it, maybe they just I don't know... I don't know... Universal in the sense of everyone can feel it, but not universal in the ways that people feel it.

## I: Have you ever been in love?

B: Yes, I have been okay. So when I saw this first, the first thing that came to mind was this guy that I had a relationship with. And then I started getting sad about it. I was like, that didn't end the way that I wanted it to. But then I realized that's not the only love that I've ever felt! Like, why is that the thing that consumes us the most, you know, like that kind of intimate love with someone. That's not the only love that there is, you know? And once you realize that it just like opens up. I don't know, you're happier

because you realize it's kind of like college, about like the essay that we were talking about if you miss an essay who really cares?!? Like you have -- there's so many other things going on that that doesn't need to consume your brain. Like that, you shouldn't be stressing out about that. So yeah... I'm in love with people that I meet. I realized that also, when I leave a lot of people I say bye love you. And sometimes I catch myself doing that and I'm like, why do I do that? I shouldn't be giving love like a um... I should be giving love more of a meaning like if I just throw it out there it's not as meaningful. But there's a reason why I say to people like I'm not just saying it like oh like love you like it actually is coming from my heart like I actually do mean it like there's something in me that made me feel okay to say that, you know?... So I think showing love to, oh I don't know what the question was anymore. I got lost in my ideas. \*giggles\* But yeah, just spreading love to where it shouldn't be spread is very important.

## I: How can you spread love?

B: Okay, so I guess going back to feeling love within and really being in a state of mind where you are, like happy enough to be able to project that happiness on other people when you interact with them. Um, was the question how to spread love?... hmm being positive I think that's like a very easy thing to say. Still, like, oh, be positive, but it's not easy to project that, it's not. Especially just like to constantly do it, it's tiring, it can definitely take a lot out of you. And I've realized that I think... I've been trying to be more you know, I guess active and just getting out and going to more clubs, um, my fall quarter more so and then this quarter I've been kind of just to myself and not really like going to the clubs that I was wanting to. Like UCLA radio I haven't been to and I love it. I love it, but I just haven't had it in me to just do other things other than class, and I realized that it's not a bad thing because I'm able to rejuvenate, right? Like I'm able to, take the time for myself and just relax so that I'm able to later on give to more people in a more empowering way or in a way that's more beneficial to everyone. And a lot of people don't really recognize that they need time to just rejuvenate because just like human interaction is so tiring sometimes!.. But yeah, I think taking the time to self reflect and just relax will allow you to spread love better in the future.





**indigo:** What are the ways  
that you enjoy love being ex-  
pressed to you?

**Bailz:** Mmm that's a good one. When someone, this is like a very simple thing, but just when someone asks you how your day is, like, how's your day going? But, I've realized also in, like American culture, it's very common for people to be like, "Oh, how are you?" and kind of just say that in passing. Whereas it shouldn't be that, it should be like, you're sitting down with someone be like, "how are you?" and you're like actually listening. One thing that I really have come to appreciate is when you're interacting with someone and you can tell that they're listening. Right now it's an interview so I mean, it's different. Like you're listening, not because you have to but, it's a different setting. But when someone's actually listening like you can tell and then you are able to talk about things more deeply because you know that they're actually like intently trying to understand where you're coming from. But also in college it's just easy to if you're busy if you don't really know... I don't know, if you're just like, going about your day, it's hard to remember just to sit down and actually ask how someone's doing. So yeah, I really appreciate that. I think that's a huge thing. Just, I guess, again, human interactions, and conversations, like legit conversations. Yeah.



## Food For Thought



## Oceanside

## Body





# SAMAR

THEY, THEM

Photo: MEL



**Age:** 21

**Color of comfort:** aquamarine and the color of the desert when it's about to turn sunset

**Home:** Los Angeles, California

**indigo:** What is love?

**Samar:** That's such a difficult question just because there's so many iterations of it, I think. There's so many different versions of how love shows up and how it manifests and I think for a really long time, I really prioritized romantic love. Just because for me, familial love was always very complicated, and very unstable. And I think romantic love for me was something that I thought could be what I was missing and lacking from familial love, so I really placed a lot-- like almost all of my heart into romantic love and then I think once I watched that fall apart really badly, I think I really started to realize the importance of building a platonic and like friendship and that love and that care and so that's something I've really been learning to value is like chosen family and learning to love them and give the love that I never really had the





capacity to give and would keep that love all very like concentrated and put it like what I said put it one person and then keep everyone else at a certain distance but I thinking I'm really learning how to really love people in a way that I feel like is different because there's less of the expectation and possession and codependency that I'd seen with romantic love. So I think for me what love is right now is learning to create healthy bonds with people based on love and care, versus placing it all in one person and assuming that they could be everything. It's like, no one person can fulfill all the love and I think also for me it's been learning that I have a lot of love to give and I don't have to stop myself from giving it just because it's been either rejected or not affirmed or like valued in the past. So, yeah, long story short. \*giggles\*





**I: If love had a smell what would that smell be?**

**S:** Um I think jasmine flowers for sure. Yeah, I really love the smell of jasmine. I think the smell of a jasmine bush as you're walking past it and you're like, you didn't know you're gonna walk past it and then you smell it and you're like, "wow! that's beautiful!" I think that's one of it-- one of the smells. I think also I really like I feel like either incense would be a really good one. Or I would say even lavender oil. Feel like those are all smells I associate with love.

**I: Is love universal?**

**S:** I feel like that's a really good question especially with manifesting maleability ending and a lot of the really big overlying questions is like... what does care and collective care look like on a larger scale and I feel like love is very much intricate in that because I feel like if we start to look at each other and look at the world around us with the capacity and understanding from a perspective of care and love and looking at people kind of as an opportunity to build instead of an-- a competitor or an enemy and like just understand it-- and it's hard sometimes because like, sometimes I'm just really fucking angry at everything because there's just so much fucked up shit happening all the time. So it's hard to sit and believe that everyone has the capacity to love or everyone deserves love. Um, but I think especially looking at things from a transformative justice perspective, too-- I'm bringing in all this shit because it's societal, I guess? And I feel like when I think about this, it always kind of relates back to these specific things that I'm always thinking about in general. But, when thinking about, love on a larger scale, it's kind of like, \*sighs\* like, I want to believe everyone deserves to be loved and everyone has the capacity to be loved.

And, I want there to be no extension or limit to my ability to give that love and care to the world around me but also believing that maybe if everyone did feel that way, we would have this movement and this ability to move toward a more liberated future where things aren't so based on productivity and competition and like I want to believe all of that is possible. I think it's just something that I'm still questioning and engaging with and figuring out where that fits in when there's people who do harm so many harmful things, and there's so much pain and violence that happens and it's sometimes it's really hard to sit and be like, "wow, like one love", you know? like that type of feeling. But um, I think part of doing and living in a way that is meant to promote love and care as really important parts of my own framework like learning to see more possibility. I mean, I guess learning to have more hope in the fact that there is love out there and everyone feels that I guess just because like, I don't know, I feel like for me it's just hard to think that sometimes when I'm thinking about people who have caused harm to others and whether they deserve to be met with love I don't know, but it's just hard sometimes to think about how that fits into everything. I mean, ideally, I wish we lived in a world where everyone loved and cared for each other, because I feel like that would be the softer and more beautiful utopia that I imagined the world can be. And I genuinely want to work toward that. It's just figuring out what that looks like I guess and believing in that is difficult sometimes.







# ISABELLA SANTANA

SHE / THEY



indigo: What is love?

Isabella: \*singing\* baby don't hurt me, don't hurt me \*giggles\* umm... It's God. That's what love is. Yeah... I mean, I think love is like, on a large scale, the all encompassing force that governs the universe, and allows us to exist as divine beings, but it's also like, can be shared between two individuals and be something that's tangible as well as something that's intangible and we can never fully understand the process. That's what it is.



AGE: 21

COLOR OF COMFORT: olive green

HOME: home is wherever I am



i: What does love smell like?

l: Salt water, I think. like the smell of the ocean, or when you're on -- when you have been in the city for a while and you go to the forest and you forget what oxygen smells like. And you smell it and you're just like this shit is pure. There's no pollution in this air. That's what love would smell like I think.

i: Is love universal?

l: Maybe pure evil, but by choice. If you're open to love, you'll receive it. Some people aren't given the opportunity to be given love from a young age so they're going to be more hesitant or have their guard up to what appears as love but everyone can be-- everyone and everything.





indigo: How do you express love? How do you enjoy love being expressed to you?

Isabella: Ugh damn, it really depends. I guess. I have a great imagination. And so I like things to be written out for me. Otherwise, I will think you're filing for divorce when you're trying to engage, you know what I mean? Like, I don't know, I do not know what's happening... My rational self is like, "this will never work out." But my more my Libra moon, it's like, "give it a shot", but my Capricorn sun is like "bitch, you know, that's not practical." So I need somebody to be like "this is what's happening." So I guess verbal confirmation, but I've been in really, really fulfilling relationships that the verbal confirmation is lacking. And it's -- but it's not necessary because there's a deeper soul connection that doesn't require words which at the end of the day, I mean language, vocabulary is limited. Language can't capture all the human emotions or feelings. There are things that we feel but cannot express. But you can look in someone's eyes and you know, you both feel that and that's all that needs to be said.

Love is just big. Big love. It's about it. It's big as fuck.

indigo: BLE, Big Love Energy

Isabella: yes! Everybody, big love energy.



photo provided by: ISABELLA SANTANA



humxn be  
being a humxn  
I love being  
a loving human

fingertips taste the trace of your triceps  
my biceps caress the fold of your knee  
kneeling down washed over I spill out onto you  
in the darkness my view is limited in catching the details of your grace.  
licking my breasts, collar bone, and neck  
I said I taste sweet like honey  
or maybe it was maple syrup I guess  
those details don't matter  
it all seems like a dream to me anyways.

non verbal communication  
on cue  
verbal cues coming through faded hues of blue  
I choke around you because there are few who I feel immediate comfort  
to truly be myself around and with you  
I am truly myself, I've grounded myself, I've surrounded myself with angels.

some demons creep in trying to tug at my ribs  
pulling me down into anxiety and fear  
I've concluded I'm battling myself.  
civilian casualties are none  
I promise I won't drag you through it  
please don't drag me through it

intense outer shell of chaos  
but I know your inner being is gentle and kind  
I'm chaotic good at compartmentalizing the outbursts  
or maybe I'm content therefor I'm floating and nothing can harm me  
but the world is chaotic, wouldn't you agree?

I love saying your name  
but only to you  
breathless when you respond a look to me  
looking in my eyes I see your fixation it could be  
that love has found us.

I wasn't looking  
and he told me "I wasn't looking"  
so silly because my subconscious knows all of this is coming  
do you even know you're helping me grow?  
I'm trusting my intuition  
trusting my innervations  
trusting my desires  
but sometimes I get tired creating new neural pathways.

love is laborious  
but love is glorious  
and love doesn't make sense because it is the only sense we have  
it is the truest form of being we have I'm so glad that I met you.  
there is so much for us to do  
I know the possibilities are endless and that's how I'm certain time can be  
reckless  
when I let it wreck my spiritual stability.

we are oddly connected  
I want to talk to you for years  
understand your mannerisms, thoughts, and patterns  
share myself with you, understand my powers  
yet ironically I understand you.

I love the way you command a room full of people I assume you know this al-  
ready  
in June we danced, unexpected nonsense but would you believe me if I saw  
that coming?  
would you believe me if I told you I saw you coming?  
felt the electricity run through me the first time I shared sapce with you  
and yes I denounced the feeling because yes you looked like my ex but yes  
I bet you felt it too  
felt the connection through the ends of your tangled curls  
bunched up as I make jokes about hair liberation  
I know you can figure ou the truth in my voice knowing that I am a voice to  
heal  
that's all I ever want to do and with you I feel that is possible  
love is liberating, it's unstoppable  
we can show the world that love is possible.





**Brandon Kwame Adu-Mensah**

*he/him*

**Age:** 21

**Color of comfort:** ASH GREY

**Home:** NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

*indigo: What is love?*

**Brandon:** Love is kind of just wanting something or desiring something without rules or conditions. It seems like everytime, when it comes to dreams or a person, like another person, or even food or small decisions like that where it's like, there could be something that's really good about the situation or something that's not that great about the situation but the fact that you still want something despite all that, I felt that was kind of like love. Yeah, that's what I think love is ... wanting something despite rules and conditions... yeah that's what it is... wanting something despite rules and conditions... I think when you asked me the question, or sent me over the question, I was just thinking like "what do I love?" And I was just like, alright I love my mother, uhh my dream job you know working in music, I love anime -- I'm a big nerd -- I love dressing up, stuff like that. And I thought like "ok what do they all kind of have in common?" And it's like, despite certain things that other people -- or just society or whatever in general -- despite things that they say about each of those things, it's like ok I'm gonna love and appreciate those people and things regardless. You know, whether it's "you can't drop out of college and move to Los Angeles" and do this and that, but if I love what I do then I can be beyond all those things. Or maybe it's like uhhh you know, "you shouldn't eat that", "you shouldn't have like too much sugar" or too much of this or that so maybe it's like an ice cream sandwich or something you know something simple, something small. I was like well if I eat it everyday, even if it's not good for me, it's like I love the food I love it so it all just kind of comes back around to... loving is definitely something that doesn't have rules or conditions. And I think what's important is like there's also negative aspects, you know like toxic relationships and stuff where it's still kind of in that same sense, or even like you know codependency and stuff like that where it's really off the edge, but it's still kind of love in the sense where people will still kind of be in those situations. And it's you know like I said it's negative you know but people will still be in those situations despite all the rules and conditions of those things and situations, so I kind of figured that was love too just at a different angle. So yeah, my general answer is that love is wanting something despite rules and conditions.



Dear BigDang 🐶

Thank you for checking in on me and checking on when needed.

These small things add up and I forget that. I'm not just a beast and I know that. Sorry about not being "us" enough. Expecting change, keep it

it's here right now

© I love you

Batteries not included



i: How do you feel love?

B: How do I feel love... what do you mean by like feel love? like how do I know when I'm feeling loved or like?..

i: So I thought of it um initially -- you're only the second person to ask me this which is funny... \*Brandon chuckles\*... so I thought of it initially in the sense of bodily... like what does that feel like to you personally internally... um... but also like how do you feel it, just like how do you experience it as well. So it can be either/or or both or whatever, yeah--

B: I think when I feel love... when I know like I feel love it's kind of umm... it's kind of like everything is at a standstill. You know, cus it's like time waits for no man, shit's always happening, I always have somethin' to do, people always have somethin' to do, but it's like when you think about small stuff like picnics, vacations, dates, uhhh fucking just small stuff... hobbies, things where people go out the way for no profit or no nothing it's always like that same sort of no rules or conditions. It's like ok you have a job interview tomorrow or you got finals, you got so many things that's happening but you know when you can feel that sense of "I don't really care" \*laughs\* Like when you can just do that despite all those situations that you have I feel like that's when I know I feel love you know... that's why I really like parties and just dancing and stuff cus it's like alright I do have a project due monday and today's Saturday so I only have Sunday to do it but like I don't care because I love this, you know. So yeah that's how I feel love... when I can just force a standstill in time.

i: Mhm, that's dope \*chuckles\* I agree. Um yeah, I've been sort of thinking about that this year too more so of just like that feeling when it's just like time doesn't exist and I don't even want it to and I don't care that it doesn't because it's just like i'm here, I'm in it... and I just love doing what i'm doing you know? yeah that's cool.





*indigo: If love had a smell what would that smell be?*

*Brandon:* Fresh laundry, oh my god. First I was like “what the fuck did that mean?” but then I was like “wait no, I kind of get it.” So yeah I said fresh laundry cus when I first got out here I would take every Sunday to just be in the crib and then most of the times I would do laundry while I’m doing it and it was just like that same sort of feeling that timelessness or that standstill just always happened every other Sunday and um it always came down to that smell of laundry in my room. I thought that was super super super nice and even I did some laundry like before I got here and it was that same sort of thing I was like “wow this is going to be a great day, I love this”. . . I love this, so yeah, love smells like fresh laundry.

⌘ *\*laughing\** nigga what the fuck, I LOVE THE SMELL OF LAUNDRY like no one’s ever told me that they fuck with the smell of laundry like that!

⌘ *shut up*

⌘ DEADASS, my friends always think i’m so weird cus it’s really chemically and toxic and I know that but like it just smells so good --

⌘ Look that’s what I’m saying look, they said it’s chemicals, they said it’s toxic but you don’t care because *\*whispers\** you love the smell. Bro, I’m tellin’ you, I’m so serious right now

⌘ yes yes, when I walk by fucking laundromats or the apartments and you can smell people’s laundry shit is going i’m like fuuuuuuuuck

⌘ it’s the smell of love

*i: Why did you choose “Something About Us” by Daft Punk? You know, you’re a fucking artist so I trust that you’re going to elaborate why you like this song.*

⌘ *\*chuckles\** Yeah I am an artist. So I first heard the song -- cus I think that’s important, right? So I first heard the song maybe November and before then I didn’t really have a sort of song that kind of matched the love like I didn’t kind of know love in a full scope in a sense where like first thing we think of is like relationships or like bonds with people and stuff and I’ve had my fair share of family bonds and friendships not really relationships so when it came to songs about other people in a love sense I’ve only written like one. . . first time hearing “Something About Us” I’m watching this movie that’s part of the album, it’s called Discovery, and you know the song “One More Time”? so there’s a video for it and there’s aliens and they’re performing or what not but there’s actually like a whole movie in relation to the album and each song has a video so “Something About Us” comes around and it’s like one of these alien band members after this crazy thing happens he’s like dying and he has a love interest who’s also an alien girl and it flashes back to them being in a picnic park situation and the song’s going on and I’m like “why am I hurting?” like I was just soooo hurt and I felt so bad. . . so that was just me feeling the song not even knowing the lyrics the whole way or anything. So when I got back into listening to the whole album and I heard what they were saying and the lyrics are literally just um “I might not be the right one, it might not be the right time but since there’s something between us, there’s something I want to say. I want you more than anything in my life” stuff like that and I felt that. Like it related to uhh to me having, I had a girlfriend my senior year of highschool and it was one of those things you know you think about it and it’s like “ohh it’s just young love, y’all are just in highschool you’re so young, you know y’all might not talk to each other like blaséblah” And I kind of felt like wow that’s kind of true where people will kind of get into bonds with other people despite not knowing where they’ll be with each other in the future but that doesn’t really matter cus you know they want that right then and there.



*And I was like wow,  
that's pretty crazy  
that's pretty cool. It's  
like "I wasn't the  
right one" or "it's not  
the right time" and I  
was like yeah but still  
I wanted that and  
that's wow, somebody  
actually was able to  
say it even though I  
didn't and I kind of  
just knew it. And they  
made it sound good too  
so I couldn't complain.*



*indigo: Is love universal?*

*Brandon:* I think love is universal... I think everybody can feel love and just because love is kind of part of perspective and you know everybody has perspective, they have their own little world that we all kind of sit on so I think that the fact that -- I mean love is just like ahhh I don't even want to call it like an emotion but... the feeling of love is something that has been across time and history. We do things out of either love or fear you know. So love itself is something that can't be labeled through time or a class of people you know?... going back to what I thought love is, we've had different societies, civilizations and you know just running through time and I just thought like ok it's all the same thing where despite all those societies and rules and just things happening because of people love has always been the same sort of things it's like imma do this despite everything else that I think should matter but doesn't... So I guess yeah the answer would be that love is universal and it's timeless and everybody can feel it, every human being can feel it. Lemme think about other things too like we got animals and stuff and I think they can feel love too. I've never even -- I wasn't even thinking about that earlier wow this is like... I never thought about love in that sort of sense, yeah I guess since humans and we have animals and we have plants and stuff like other living beings they can kind of feel love too cus it's like there's nothing saying that we should kind of coexist the way we do and it seems like sometimes we don't like we try to force-- like we got technology moving forward, we got like natural disasters and stuff sometimes it doesn't seem like we're all always supposed to be with each other but we are and we kind of just don't care, you know? So yeah I guess love is for everybody, everything that's living at least. And it's timeless. wow this is so cool, I would never ask myself some of these questions so it's like oh shit.



*indigo: Have you ever been in love? If so, how was that experience?*

*Brandon:* I think so. I think that me being 21 now compared to the situation that I called love at 18 or 17 I don't really know, you know? It's like let's say my first definition of love would be like with another person who's not related to me as a partner -- well I guess one of my many definitions -- and the first time I got into like a commitment with another person a lot of it was more of just like us just happy to be around each other despite rules and conditions you know? so I was like that's kind of love. but I figured like hmm... you know what? maybe it was just for that reason... fuck! look like look at this! oh my gosh I really haven't -- I'm -- this is so cool and overwhelming -- well not overwhelming but I'm glad I'm feeling this sort of way, I don't do this enough for myself so I'm kind of glad you got me here it's awesome, yeah... I think I've been in love before and so I thought I did then so it's no reason why it would be any different now so yeah I've been in love before with like another person umm... and yeah. Everything was super cool, like uh we were each other's firsts... she was going through some things with like other boyfriends and stuff she had before and this was like, she was like my first real girlfriend so that was pretty cool too so kind of just the novelty of being in love with somebody who I hadn't grown up with like that, that was super cool. So yeah I've been in love before with at least, you know, like somebody who I didn't already know in that way -- or at least love intimately. And then, I guess the other aspects like you know I've always had my mother around so that's you know that type of love which is always pretty cool... Um, I've had my father for a good portion of my life at least not all of it but a good portion. When I say like even now, I got love for him, which is um... yeah... damn... yeah I got love for him too, which is crazy... my bad I'm kind of like feeling something. This is so, it's so crazy... It's like uh I think damn with my father, it's like he's one of those guys where when I was living with him it was super awesome, like he was a clown and he loved to dance and laugh. He translates into like the same way I am and but that was just me as a kid and then but he wasn't always like the best person that

I knew of the whole way, you know? And then but I didn't know that until like maybe when I graduated high school that he was like an asshole to a lot of people you know? He's like a handsome devil but he had passed away when I was in the 7th grade, right? so it's kind of like I have all this love for him at these points and then I get to somewhere where it's like I get a hard truth and it hits me, and I think like thinking about it I still kind of never really knew how to feel at that time but I think as I keep getting older it's like I still appreciated-- wow i'm bout to tear up -- uhh shit that I had with him you know? cus he didn't have to kind of... kinda... even as a negative trait of kind of just traded faces you know? he didn't have to do that and he did... it's kind of like when people lie to protect people and I guess despite that not being a great trait like it's still always out of love so yeah I think I love him too... yeah... wow... that was crazy um... uhh... yeah, wow those are probably like the two biggest instances where I had to deal with like love... my father and my first girlfriend. Wow, that was a lot. that was cool.

⌘ thank you for sharing that dude, what the heck! It's not easy being like really vulnerable in a public park with someone that you've known for maybe a year? ... yeah like fuck... you're safe, like let it out but also don't feel like you have to do anything you're not comfortable doing.

⌘ nah this is why i'm here, you know? I came here to answer these questions and I kind of thought about it when I had seen that you were like looking for people to ask about and I was like "damn, nigga... like what is love?" I hear about it and sometimes I even like try to rap about it and you know, I get to some points but like I never really think about it, you know? we just, the definitions kind of get fed to us, you know? you feel me? alright especially -- you know it's like primal too... just stuff like that where love is something that we never really had to ask ourselves that because it was always society and other people always telling us so I think this is cool cus I never really asked myself. Now that I kind of have an answer for myself it'll kind of just help me, and you know it'll help you, so I'm kind of glad... I'm really glad actually, not kinda. this is crazy.





social construct  
constricting us in our thought but  
only some of us have unlocked the box.

when I am myself,  
I am in accordance with everybody else  
we all need help  
therefore I'm willing to tell  
to yell  
my  
story.

we have a society built on insecurity  
therefore security is all consuming it's all we  
worry  
about.

freedom will always be  
found in safety.  
I doubt foundations built on fear will sustain

I build foundations on love.



# Zahra Hajee

*she/her*



photos provided by: ZAHRA HAJEE

*Age: 21*  
*Color of comfort: periwinkle*  
*Home: the Bay area*



## *indigo: What is love?*

**Zahra:** Love is home. Yeah, there. I mean, I think a lot of times, we very much focus on romantic love. And I think there are a lot of different metaphors that people have used to describe romantic love and stuff about all the different jigsaw puzzles fitting together and all of that, and I think a lot of that has made me feel really, I guess, insecure about finding love in the way that people have presented like, “Oh, it’s supposed to feel like this or that.” But I think whenever I feel the sense of “I love someone”, or “I’m being loved by someone” I think the first place that I really experienced that was I guess within my household with my family and that was always home, right? So that every time I felt like I loved someone or someone loved me after that, it always just had that same feeling it was attached to home. So I guess love to me is just that feeling of home with someone else.

## *i: How do you feel love?*

**Z:** How do I feel love? I think there are different types of feelings associated with it. So I think say like if it’s with someone else, and it’s, I guess in the category of romantic love or something, then what I feel like in myself is something that’s more stimulating, it’s like, something rushing through my veins sort of feeling right? Like,

“Oh my gosh, what’s happening?” sort of thing. And I guess it took a lot of growth and maturity to figure out or I don’t even know if I’m there yet but to figure out the difference between the butterflies in your stomach, initial, passionate feelings and distancing that from “Okay, yes, those passionate feelings are there but is that love? Or is that just excitement of just that initial feeling of knowing that someone is interested in you, you’re interested in them”, right? So I think having that distinction between that and then the love I feel around my family, my friends and family is more of the opposite. Not like it’s depressive, obviously. Kind of like a come down, more mellow feeling when I’m with them because I associated them with that. I feel like I’m at home. I feel like I’m safe. I feel like I’m secure. So I think that feeling. Yes, there’s still something that I’m feeling inside but a lot more general warmth instead of that electricity that you’re feeling flowing. So I think that’s the differences that I’ve been feeling between initial, passionate love or that later love where maybe the passion part of it falls a little bit but it’s also replaced by security and warmth in a way that I still think is really magical even if it’s not that initial “Whoo!”.



photo provided by: ZAHRA HAJEE



*indigo: Why did you choose this song?*

**Zahra:** So Tum Hi Ho, So like “Tum” is “You” and then like, “Hi Ho”, it’s literally like “You are here”. So, in the song. . . with a lot of South Asian Music, especially I think like now it’s kind of changing, but before it’s always associated with a movie. So the songs are always associated with a story. So with this movie in Aashiqui 2, it’s like how I was saying before it was similar to A Star Is Born where there was this woman and she was passionate about singing and then he kind of like took on like a mentorship role with her because he had already gone through that process. So then they started working together, and then he fell in love with her and then she later fell in love with him. But the movie-- this movie is a little different than A Star Is Born in the way that they really show what he’s going through in terms of his drug addiction and how it impacts their relationship, and really showing it because I think A Star Is Born really brushed over a lot of the parts that would probably be a lot more difficult to watch or could be more triggering for people. Because at the end of Aashiqui 2, she has to leave him. And, it was so difficult because she loved him but then at the same time she knew what being with him was doing to her and how it was impacting her. And just seeing that pain, but also that love at the same time was just, I don’t know it hurts here, you know? But I guess it at least taught me a lesson about just love and again like how what people make love out to be where it’s always supposed to be sort of this picture perfect story with a happy ending where it’s no sometimes you can still love someone but know that you’ve done as much as you can for them and sometimes you have to take care of yourself too, or sometimes you fall in and out of love, and maybe fall back in love again and there are just so many different stories associated with love with so many different relation dynamics that you have, whether it be with your family, with your friends with a significant other. It really depends the situations and what people are going through different stages of their life change, but I think with that movie specifically, her leaving him even though it was a hard decision to make, you know that at the end of the day like that love is still going to be there between them for a very very long time, possibly even the rest of their lives. So just knowing that even though the physical circumstances are changing, that love that they feel for each other will continue to sustain beyond that, and it transcends something more. It was really interesting and I really like that. So I think that’s why I like this song.





## Trigger Warning: Sexual Violence

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Am I a survivor? I sound the battle-cry of “Believe Women” every time another accusation catches a sliver of attention before it’s cast away into a rusty bucket where the next news cycle leaves it to rot. Where all truths go to rot. Where my truth will go to rot. It is difficult to pinpoint what it is I truly fear. If I come forward, people will believe me—he’s got a history. We idolize the fighter, and if I take this fight public it would only mean a brighter future for me after securing justice against my perpetrator, right? Was he my perpetrator? Why do I doubt myself? I remember him saying, “why are you pulling away from me?” as he continued to climb on top of me. All I wanted to do in that moment was pull away, and instead I let it happen. And instead, as I stepped into the elevator, I channeled that chilling feeling that swept over me into a punchline for my friends to joke about moments later. It made everything feel more distant, less real. So why does it feel so real to me now, three years later?

-ZH

*i: Have you ever been in love?*

**Z:** Being in love, I can say there are specific friends that I love. I love my family. But I don’t think at this point I’ve ever been in love romantically. I’ve had situations where I thought I was in love, I thought about it and I really thought about it after I said it and I was like “Zahra, dude, do you really think so?” And you’re like, “No.” I think it’s a very different feeling to have a crush, and you know, we’re Pisces, you can experience some very intense levels of attraction or feelings for someone.

I’ve realized over time is that love doesn’t equate to the level of intensity that you’re feeling. If that makes sense, at least for me, I don’t think that’s what it is anymore. And that just comes from my personal experiences with people and after not having feelings for them anymore and reflecting on why, and how I traditionally associate love with a feeling of safety and security a lot of times and when I feel very intense things for someone, it’s usually not associated with those sorts of things and usually associated with something more, I don’t know, like that adrenaline rush for me is always coupled with something a little more like dangerous, I guess. And yeah. And I think that’s why at this point it’s like you can love someone and have a very intense level of feeling, but I don’t think that those two things have to go hand in hand. Does that make sense?



**indigo:** *How do you express love/how do you enjoy love being expressed to you?*

**Zahra:** Well, I took that love language test! SO, according to that I like quality time and acts of service and then I also express love in those two ways. So those were like my top two, both ways. And I think I really resonate with that. Especially in this day and age, when I feel like a lot of us are just ruled by our schedules in a sense, think we're definitely just the way the world works and the amount of information and everything that we're bombarded with, I think it's become more difficult for people to be able to make time for each other. And I'm not sure if that's a choice that people have made or because of the circumstances but I know that someone loves me and I love them when we're able to make quality time for each other. . . Knowing that if months have passed, we're able to spend time with each other in a way that feels like nothing's changed or we're not setting barriers up in any way, and feel that special connection with that person, that's what I mean in terms of quality time. It's about the quality not the quantity \*giggles\* right? it's quality time. \*giggles\* So I think that's definitely one component of it because I think like especially in most recent times with people that I have considered very close to me, it's been interesting seeing this transition where I initially felt like Yes we just get to spend the time that we have together, I'm just so grateful for that time that we're spending to a point where it's like felt like a sort of exchange or if that person is like doing a service to me with the time that they're giving. And I think that when it gets to a point where it feels like an exchange or transaction, that's not what love feels like anymore because it's supposed to be unconditional in the way that love is. I think that is one of the qualities of love that it is a very unconditional -- it's like mutually unconditional. When it's unconditional and one-sided that just sucks! But yeah like quality time and also the second one. . . acts of service span across both how the person treats me, but also how they treat other people because I wouldn't want someone who loves me just to be treating me respectfully because of their relationship with me and then decide that it's okay to not treat others respectfully because they don't have that sort of relationship. I think with those foundational aspects of treating someone with respect and being there for someone and being a good person all around, I don't like that thing where it's like very conditional



where like, someone just treats you that way because of their relationship with you and doesn't do that for the rest of the world. Something that comes to mind is that argument on women's rights related stuff, where they're like, "Oh, would you want this to happen to your sister or your daughter or your mom?" That shouldn't be the reason why you're doing something, just because of that relationship with someone who should you should be doing that because they're a fucking person just like you and they deserve that baseline level of respect, you know? Acts of service is seeing someone being able to treat me and make me feel special but also treating everyone and making everyone feel special and having those random acts of kindness, you know? Because I think that's what the world needs a bit more of nowadays especially. I don't want to discount other aspects of love sometimes you know, when you're sitting together and those small like physical touches or when someone just randomly brings a little gift for you after they come home from a trip and just been like "Oh yeah I thought of you", I think those things are also really special for sure. But I think that acts of service and the quality time are the two things that I resonate the most with. And that's the way that I show my love as well.

photo provided by: ZAHRA HAJEE









**Kiriko**  
**April**

**she/her**

**Age: 22**  
**Color of**  
**comfort: yellow**  
**Home: Mid-City,**  
**Los Angeles**



## **indigo: What is love?**

**Kiriko:** HA! Um, okay, so I feel like there was this, like a prime, I don't know, like my highest, level I feel like I reached maybe spiritually or something was last year. I think it was kind of before I dropped out of school or during that time. And I remember I had read Deepak Chopra. Um, and it was a lot about just giving and I felt like everything I was reading I had already implemented in my life. And then I really took that and I started complimenting people like just strangers I would just compliment everyone I passed. . . and then I had so much love, like I had so much love. And I was just-- I loved humans. I was just like everyone's so beautiful and I love everybody. . . and I felt untouchable. And then-- I mean now I don't feel that way so it's different um and I think about it every so often and I'm just like damn like should I try to do that again? But um yeah, but for that I think love can just be like nice exchanges of energy with people and the intensity. . . there's different types of love You know, I think-- also I think the romantic scope of love is a different -- for me, it's really intense but at the same time it's so intense a lot of people just can't handle it, and so then it's like, because I want to give so much, but they can't or I'm needy, and it's like okay, like, let's get let's go deep like let's go hard, but they're not there. So there's that type and then. . . yeah I have love for friends and but lately I honestly feel more alone and just I feel like disattached from people, from friends and I feel guilty and I think it's because I'm really focusing on my future and I'm focusing on how to perfect my craft. And every weekend I'm in my studio going forever. . . but I feel really guilty because I feel like I had that intensity for friends that I could give all my energy to and, give my money to and give everything like I can cook for them. But I feel like I haven't been doing that anymore because I'm so intensely trying to save a certain amount of money. And I'm just like, avoiding people or I just feel like everyone's gone because I've isolated myself. So, yeah. . . Yeah, I'm hoping because. . . then I think. . . to me it's gonna it's gonna somehow pay off-- not somehow but it's a goal and then that goal is like, it'll pay off and but at the same time, like every moment is happening and I'm not doing those moments I'm not with certain people. So then it's like, do they fade away? Because I've become such a isolated



trying to be like workaholic like?? so it's kind of this weird stage where I go back and forth weekly about that. yeah, because before this new shift and goals that I have for myself, I was so friend oriented, like, everything was friends and I, I always felt like I was there for them. But I kind of don't feel as present. So, yeah, and then I've, I've also lost a ton of people in my life for the first time. So that's really kind of changed a lot of my perspective. And I'll start simping later like, Fuck, Did I mess up or... but it kind of just happened and it is what it is. And I don't think it's different now so I kind of feel like I should just move on because there's moments where I'm like, oh, should I should I try to grab this thing that no longer exists? But it's just different and I feel like I just have to be grateful for existing and just hope that more people with similar energies will come to me, yeah.

## I: How do you feel love?

**K:** How do I feel love?... I think food is a huge thing. Whether it's cooking for people or either cooking for myself or just eating something good. Because I'll dance, I'll just be like \*does a little dance\* And those moments I'm like, Damn, this is so good. And then... it's a suffering sacrifice right now because I'm like, "okay, I can't be spending too much money on food." But, then I'm so fucking sad. And I'm just like, "oh my god, I'm so sad. Like, this is shit." I either-- I don't even know what I'm eating but uhm and it's that pressure too because it's like now I'm constantly thinking about money so it's a whole new pressure that's just too much and I feel like I should figure out how to balance that. But yeah food I feel like food is a big thing where I started cooking for friends and that became a whole little hashtag I started with videos and that... that's great because mostly when they enjoy the food it's because it's my love. And then the other day which-- is a long ass time ago-- I made myself a bomb ass sandwich. And I was just eating it during the art fair or something. And I was just like, "damn, I love myself! this is bomb!" I'm like crying into my sandwich like "this is so good!", but um, yeah, I feel love with, just interaction and, and just energy exchange with people and mostly when it's like-minded kind of both on the same type of wave and we're yeah I don't know, inspired by people it's-- also humor! and laughing! just laughing!

At one point I'm like okay I can only be making friends with people that make me laugh because it's the purest joy that I can feel or give and it's just like when someone's laughing or like at me or whatever too, I'm just with it and it makes me really happy. So I think that's a huge thing.

## indigo: If love had a smell what would that smell be?

**Kiriko:** If love has a smell?... well... I almost just want to go with a smell I like but um... jasmine flowers, they grow in front of my house and they smell amazing. And I feel like that's love. Like I've had neighbors walking through and this one time there was a baby and mom or whatever. And the baby was just smelling the flowers and going into my front yard and just playing on the grass. And the mom's trying to take her away cuz she's like trespassing. It was cute. And I was just like... I get comments like, I can hear people commenting on how good it smells, and it's a whole bush in front of my house. So yeah, and I tried to make Jasmine ice cream recently, but it wasn't-- my mom was like critiquing it because it was not that flagrant, but, I mean, I thought it was pretty good. But then she's like, "it just tastes like condensed milk", which yeah, it was cream and sugar and jasmine flowers... And also because... when they were blossoming in front of my house, I was bringing them to school every day to give to people. \*pointing to her friend that came along to our interview\* \* This bitch got some. So that's Yeah, that's something.





**indigo:** Why did you choose this particular song?

**Kiriko:** Okay, Hope Tala is the artist and the name is “Love Stained”. Yeah, yeah. It’s just-- so it’s really a comforting song. And she literally says, she’s like, “I’ll make it better for you.” Okay. And I just-- yeah, and her voice is just like really soothing. So, I’ve been listening to her a lot.





**Tev**

they/them

**Age:** 21... that means there's 9 years till  
30.. FUCK

**Color of comfort:** forest green

**Home:** Valencia, California

**indigo:** What is love?

**Tev:** Well, it's that like complex chemical reaction inside you. Um, and you know it's love when it starts to mess with your logical functions and your logical plans and just your set cut and dry ideas suddenly it becomes-- everything becomes more complicated and instead of thinking about logical things suddenly love replaces that, you start thinking about it and uh... I don't know, what is love?... so broad... I feel like love is anything that makes you feel like more-- ugh sounds corny-- more I don't know cosmically in tune. Especially because and in the way that you are feeling some way towards anything else and that's just like a special kind of experience. Something broad.



i: How do you feel love?

T: Um definitely like, on the backs of my palms and in my stomach and in my cheeks and how do I feel it? How do I feel it? I feel very intensely and so it's very it's not very um... it's-- it never it's-- when it's happening I know it's there and it's not it's not very subtle... or might start subtle but it's it's very blatant for me. Yeah intense.

i: What does love smell like?

T: Like the morning. I don't know why but I've all-- I have, I guess from past just experiences and memories, especially in school my younger days, like sitting around in the morning with a significant other and falling in love on freshly cut grass to me I love freshly cut grass and it just like, reminds me of that or will bring back some memories.

indigo: Why did you pick "Don't Talk Put Your Head On My Shoulder" by the Beach Boys?

Tev: It's not really even a singular experience I've had, like, while listening to it, which is I'm sure what a lot of people will be talking about, like, "oh, this is the song I was in love when--" It wasn't really that it was just it's kind of purely was based on hearing it alone and like it was so powerful to me. Specifically, I remember just one point it-- I was driving home like, late at night... But yeah or it was someone I was thinking about and like putting it into the song and the lyrics are so powerful, it's because everyone can relate to that, like, you know, you're with someone, you don't have anything to say but just feeling the touch is so powerful and so comforting and I don't know, it's just kind of a throw-back doowopy kind of song and it just like it feels nostalgic. In a strange way and there's-- it's like love is inferred. It's not even there's no direct "I love you" in the song. It's just like, you know what it is you just know. I'm gonna just pull up a lyric just because I'm blanking on them... Oh yeah, yeah, there's just no-- I guess he says at one point "being here with you feels so right", but like, "I can hear so much in your sighs, I can see so much in your eyes there are words we could both say, but don't talk put your head on my shoulder." I just-- I love that. And then, yeah, "don't talk, take my hand and let me hear your heartbeat" like on your shoulder. Ah! that's about it, but yeah.





photo provided by: T

## *i: Is love universal?*

*T:* Well, I'm just gonna start with excluded because I've never even thought about that. Um, sometimes I wonder if inanimate objects can't feel love. But... I'm, I'm gonna go I don't know, it's like hard to say because they can't talk back to me. But I think they do. I'm just gonna hypothesize they do like that piano over there. It's sending something back at me. I don't know what it is. But when I- I'm just saying, I'm just saying, I don't know... I'm sure there are people... I'm sure there are people that can't feel love and that's unfortunate, but or maybe it's not to them. I don't know. But I think I think we're all like, you know, different chemical makeups. And I'm sure there are people that got short ended maybe a little bit too much, and it's just not something I think about. But ugh I would hope not. I don't know who and then what was it was like, Who's excluded or included? I think everyone can love and has potential to. Yeah.

## *i: Have you ever fallen in love?*

*T:* Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Fall in Love real quick. uh... How was it? I mean, it's always it's always good. Yeah, no, it's like, you know, high highlights in my life, of course. I'm feeling good again, just recently. So, yeah, real, real nice. Two thumbs. A nine and a half out of 10. \*laughing\* How was it? Yeah, it's, I think I think the worst part about it for me, I'm just gonna go with the negative because it's all mostly positive. Otherwise, it's just like a bit of fear, because I don't know. . . I think it's the most powerful form of attachment. And so, especially at like this age of, I'm 21 I don't know, it's likely that in my case, if I'm falling in love, it might, it might not, you know, be a forever thing, which is, you know, it's normal for people in their 20s and whatnot. So it's just that fear, but I've been like kind of dealing with that just you just got to live in the moment and be happy every, you know, every chance you get to love and every chance you are in love and feeling that is such a blessing, so can't complain.





WE'RE LIVING  
AND DYING  
AT THE SAME TIME  
TIME IS PASSING  
AND STILL THIS MOMENT IS THRIVING WITH CHANGE.  
METAPHORICALLY TRYING TO AVOID DEATH  
I'LL ENJOY THE END OF EVERYTHING  
AS THE BEGINNING.

WHAT IS MY IMPACT?  
INTERNALLY WHAT DO I WANT TO KEEP INTACT  
AS I MOVE THROUGH SPACE  
INEVITABLY  
FEAR CREEPS IN AND I BLESS THEE  
BLESS MYSELF FIRST SO I CAN CARE FOR WE  
NEED EACH OTHER THE MOST  
AS I COMMUNICATE THESE IDEAS I SPEAK OF NO OWNERSHIP  
MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT ORIGINAL  
NOTHING I COULD CAPTURE AND SHIP ACROSS THE OCEAN  
ALL THAT I CAN DO IS SET MYSELF, SET MY INTENTIONS IN MOTION  
THE MUNDANE IS WHERE I'LL BE  
EXISTING IN THE MICRO IS THE SAME AS THE MACRO  
JUST TO BE ONE PART OF THE WHOLE IS INFINITELY SATISFYING  
GRATEFUL THAT I'M DYING  
AND LIVING  
THAT I AM LOVING THROUGH IT ALL.



# Ariana Mamnoon

she/her

Age: 22

Color of comfort: DARK GREEN

Home: LONG BEACH, CA

photo provided by: ARIANA MAMNOON

indigo: What is love?

**Ariana:** ugh, I don't know -- \*giggles\*-- love is wow...ya when I read that I thought "I won't have an answer for you" but I'll attempt it. I think love definitely is a multiplicity of things, it's a spectrum it's you know something you can experience it's something you can manifest for yourself it's something that can be given to you that you can give to other people. For me, at the moment I think just to speak love is about being present and being you know in the moment with everything that you're doing and being okay with that, that's love. In terms of people I think love is being selfless in these experiences and if you're you know let's say in a relationship, a friendship, your parents, your dog, providing what you would do for yourself for them and more and just being you know welcoming to their feelings their emotions their experiences and love is also I think this very vulnerable thing that while you're doing a zine we don't understand love but I don't think anyone will understand love but I think there's moments where you get these glimpses of when you can kind of attach yourself to what love is, it's a very beautiful thing. Love is beautiful! yeah! I don't know! now I'm like, fuck I don't even know what love is.

i: \*laughing\* no pressure, no pressure.

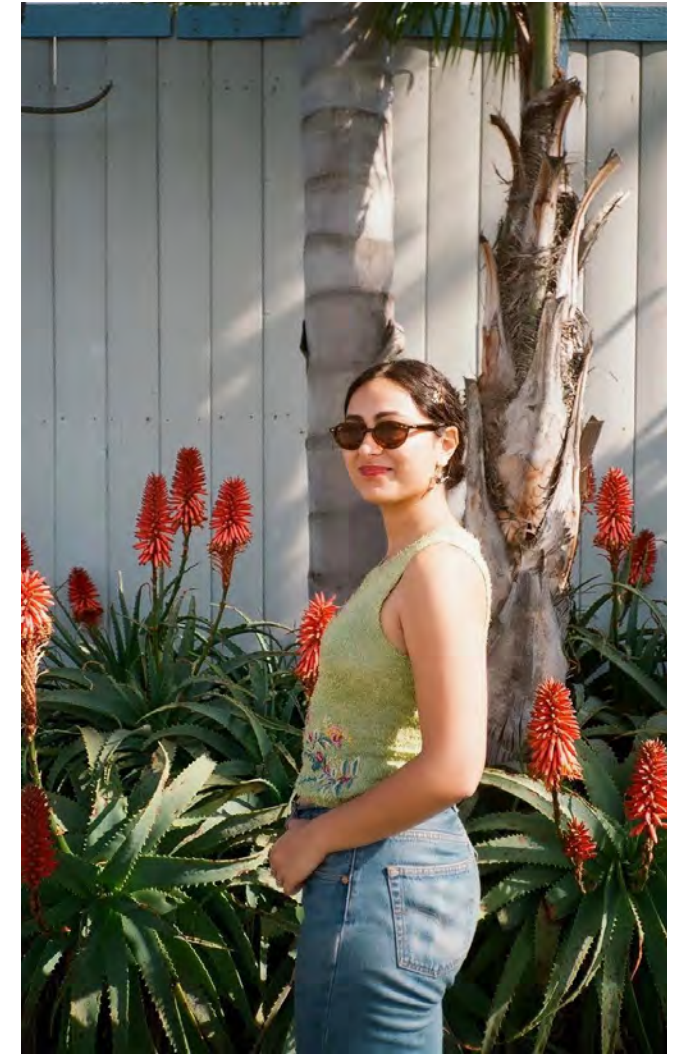


## *Q: How do you feel love?*

*A:* Ugh, umm I think for myself in terms of feeling yes love for myself it's spending time alone whether that be like two days ago I was just sitting at the sculpture garden laying down on the grass and for me I was like "this is giving myself love." i'm just sitting here and nurturing my body and i'm loving the Earth you know I love the Earth so much and the planet and life and I feel like moments where you can kind of sit and give yourself what the world has to offer that's something giving yourself love. Umm... how do you feel love... that was the question right? I think you feel love also by allowing yourself to let go of your ego in a way and really -- in the case of another person if you're experiencing love with them it's feeling how their -- it's not necessarily feeling how their feeling but being open and being okay with the feelings that are going to come out of it and that's how you feel love because love can be beautiful love can be a mess and you have to be okay with being open to feeling it and very vulnerable. So I think that's how you would feel love, just being vulnerable and yeah just very present and aware and mindful of the situation.

*Q:* Shoutout to Arthur Little for that "loving people raw!!" that's what I heard \*giggles\*

*A:* Oh my god the false consciousness! Shoutout James Baldwin, shoutout Arthur Little. you need to interview him, UGH! But he said in order to love properly you need to release your ego. He wrote and I wrote it my little notebook where I jot down drawings and notes and good things and that class had me always, he was like the false consciousness in order to reverse it you must free and release your ego then you can love. And I was like "Arthur Little what does that even mean??" but then I was like "fuck you're right!" Because we all have these egos and



we all think we need love but love will come to you when you are just really being you know like I don't know the word but just when you're frolicking through life, that's when love is going to come to you. Not when you're out there pushing yourself on things.





photo: ARIANA MAMNOON

*indigo:* Why did you chose "Take Care" by Beach House?

*Ariana:* Well Beach House in general -- obviously they've been my favorite band for a very long time because they're very vulnerable, fragile, a very beautiful band and I think they kind of define and give love so much like for me at least I find love in their music and they just write these really ambiguous beautiful songs and that's what love is, it's this very ambiguous and extraordinary thing that we don't really understand and I think they do a really good job of trying to understand love and the void of love and all that stuff. But "Take Care" specifically, uhm yeah it's off of Teen Dream and that's an album I was listening to when I was a teenager and I remember like you know whenever I was sad over a boy I'd listen to you know Beach House and they would get me through it. "Take Care" I used to think it meant -- they have a lyric "I'll take care of you, that's true." I used to think that meant taking care of someone else and it probably could be and maybe in a couple years if I'm with someone I really love it's going to mean that lyric again, but -- and I actually wrote about this in a journal that I just was writing and I went back on it to write the lyric to read for me "I'll take care of you, that's true" like "I'll take care of you, like Ari Imma take of you that's true." and that lyric I think speaks to me about love because its kind of just saying "Hey you need to love yourself before, again, you're going to love anyone else" so that's what I really like about that song uhm yeah and it's very cool cus they even acknowledge "I'll take of you in a year or two." Like it takes time to love, it takes time to give yourself that space to love yourself and I think love is this very you know non-stop process that we're trying to understand... all these things are reminders that you don't have to love perfectly, you just have to try and try and love.

*ig:* Totally yeah it's a process forsure.

*A:* Love is a process, yeah.






Logan,

I love you dearly.  
I am so glad that I get  
to share my life with  
you and have a family  
with you. You mean  
everything in the world to me.  
Every single thing. I cannot  
imagine my life without you.  
I just wanted to write  
you something to remind  
you that someone (I, as  
well as others) care deeply  
about you. I love you and  
am so excited to see you  
and spend time with you.

Love,  
Samuel





I AM A TOE CUDDLER  
NOSE FLUTTERER  
SHOULDER KISSER  
FOREHEAD LICKER  
HEAVY WORD LISTENER

TOUGH LOVE  
COLD RUBS  
GOOD HUGS

I'M HERE  
HE'S WEIRD  
DEEP FEARS

EARTH DWELLERS  
GO GETTERS  
FEEL BETTER

TURN ON  
TURN OFF  
BURN OUT

LEARN HOW  
BE NOW  
LOST FOUND





SHE / HER  
**RACHEL HARRIS**

AGE: **20**

COLOR OF COMFORT: **deep green,  
forest green**

HOME: **Los Angeles**



## INDIGO: WHAT IS LOVE?

**RACHEL:** Ugh. I think love is just happiness. Um, and I don't think there needs to be a distinction between loving and inanimate object or loving a thing or loving an idea. I think it's just something that brings you happiness and joy when thinking about it when being with it when being in contact with it.

## I: HOW DO YOU FEEL LOVE?

**R:** Um, I think just literally speaking, I just feel love when I am surrounded by things that I feel like support me. Whether that's physically like I don't know, or just more in a familial and friendly sense or when I can support others. I think that feeling of just being dependable and being dependent, I think is really important. Even though I think I really pride myself in being an independent person. I pride myself and definitely find love-- I think for me being dependent is being vulnerable and whether it's on something or someone-- so I think I definitely find love in those spaces when I can be vulnerable, and can be comfortable.





## INDIGO: IF LOVE HAD A SMELL WHAT WOULD THAT SMELL BE?

**RACHEL:** ooof, um... this is so weird. So like, you know how people are attracted to smells like some-- there's this one-- I've been attracted to the smell since I was six and I remember this because I was on the bus to Pali camp I had no friends Jill just shipped me off on a bus to where I don't know-- I didn't know no one at this camp and so I'd sit on the bus in the back everyday by myself totally fine, content just by myself and there was this boy. I don't remember what he looked like, it doesn't matter because his smell, his smell captivated me -- literally I sat on the edge of the seat so I could smell him every day. It's really interesting because there's like certain points on my campus where I smell it and it's really just a fresh air smell but it's like a human scent. And I don't know I can't pinpoint because it's definitely not a perfume because I don't really like perfumes I don't really like fragrances and yes like I love flowers and love good food smells but there's something about this that like I literally turn my head whenever I smell it, because I'm trying to pinpoint-- But it's just like a freshness and I'd say like the ocean breeze but I don't really like the ocean that much so it's not... It's like this it's a fresh essence but it also is like a humanly nature to it if that makes any sense. It's I like I wish that they sold this in a fucking bottle. Because I love this smell so much, but I know it's just some people's like aura. And it's disappointing when I see some people that like smell like that. And I'm just like, I'm not attracted to you, but I could smell you for the rest of my life.





## I: HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN LOVE?

**R:** It hurts. It's not good. I don't know. I like to say I don't know what love feels like for me. But I think in the in the scenarios I've said that in before, it's because I do know what love feels like and I haven't admitted it and like nothing has matched up to that. So I think love for me, just in the more tangible sense in relation to another person at least has been a fearful thing. I hope to expand beyond that and I'm not pessimistic in the sense that this is all it's gonna amount to for me, but thinking of first feelings of love or first inclinations of love, it's fear, because I don't let myself be vulnerable. If I feel bad and feel myself being dependent or feel myself kind of at the hands of someone else I don't like that, I don't like that. And I feel like familial love is just different for me, it's manifested differently and of course I depend on my family and love them unconditionally, but it's not the same sense of love, I could feel myself changing because of that. Whereas like, this other sense of love, I can definitely feel myself not being manipulated because I think it's more self manipulation in hopes of like attaining that mutual love.

## I: DO YOU THINK LOVE IS UNIVERSAL?

**R:** I think the expectations that capitalism has placed on love is exclusionary, but I don't think love itself at its core is exclusionary. I think the ways in which we were taught to show love, like through material things and even just through quality time spent, I think... And it's really interesting, sorry segue, I took the love languages quiz. I love that. And I thought it was really interesting. I was like, yeah, this is a technology generated place, whatever, but I thought it was super interesting to look at because I get really frustrated with some of my friends when I don't feel like they're reciprocating the ways in which I give to them. And looking at that and acknowledging how people have such different ways of portraying love and alluding to that was really eye opening.



And I think just in relation to your question, I think so many people show so many other people and other things love in different ways. And I think with capitalism and with gift giving, and with quality time spent, not everyone always has in their full capacity or the means to do such. So I feel like by that means it's exclusionary, I'm not even gonna single out groups of people because I feel like it manifests differently in every person... I'm in this really interesting class called social sexualities. And I thought we're gonna talk about queerness, which we did for like a day but then we were talking about eco sexuals and asexuality and the diversity within like asexuality and how you can be queer, aromantic, etc. you know? There's just so there's so much. I think labels are inherently exclusionary, but I think we're also growing to accept more people, more labels and let people define who they are for themselves. I think you can find love within that. Just hopefully, obviously, capitalism will combust soon, so we can all live freely, but more or less, (capitalism) is stopping everyone from reaching their full potential.



in my garden of heathens  
I look to the realms we've been in contact with each other  
developing like no other  
I wonder when my dreams will manifest  
as I fester up the courage to make amends with my former self  
with all the wounds I have not dealt  
with  
as I'm being  
a being  
pulled in many directions with no way of seeing how I'm advancing  
advantages include a multitude of abilities  
sharing one foot in the material plane  
and one foot in spirituality  
all I know is compassion for my fellow humans  
so I follow this course as if it is my only plan  
reading sermons of great leaders with no authority -- studying the revolution  
so I'll study myself,  
my evolution  
engulfed in agape is the solution  
to all of the doubts, fears, worries, and confusion  
would you believe me if I told you we have been living an illusion?



photo: CARINA ELIS







# CONTRIBUTORS

Special thank you to everybody who made this book possible! I am eternally grateful for your contribution. A lot of these folks are artists/creatives themselves so please check out their work, follow their social media, read their theory, etc. :)

XOXO

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# Playing indigo

she/they

Age: 22

Color of comfort: every color, but if I had to  
chose one it would be green

Home: my body, Earth

What is love?

Love is everything and it's also nothing, which means it  
can be whatever we want so therefor it's everything.  
Love is the name of God, of the universe, of us.

How do I feel love?

I feel true love when I take a deep breathes, release all the  
tension in my body, relax my mind, and just enjoy the mo-  
ment-- when I'm just being.

